Mistress of the Situation.

BY JENNIE CHAPPELL, AUTHOR OF "BY THE WAY OF THE VALLEY," ETC.

"'It's all right,' said Keith. 'Only, don't tell.'" *p.* 50.

CHAPTER VII.

RESPITED.

WE had to summon a cab to take Edric Moore to his home, which was about half-a-mile away. Alarming symptoms of some internal injury showed themselves when he recovered from his temporary unconsciousness, and we felt that he ought to be seen by a doctor with as little delay as possible. Keith went with him.

What a night it was that followed! Not one in the house slept a single hour, except it might have been Mary. Keith had rushed back about ten o'clock to say that he was going to stay with his friend, who seemed "pretty bad." Edith was wide-eyed and wretched with anxiety about Edric, while poor dear father, in the chamber next ours, was pacing up and down in pain. I went to him several times, but could do no good; indeed, I was afraid to try or suggest anything in so critical a case as that of injury to the most precious and delicate member that we possess. He was to see the surgeon again next morning.

Almost as soon as it was light, Mary was upstairs, gently knocking at our door with cups of tea and biscuits. She thought we might be glad of something, she simply said.

"How kind of her!" I exclaimed, involuntarily, as I set the little tray, with its tiny jug of milk and extra lumps of sugar unforgotten, upon the dressing-table, and heard a gentle tap and a chink of china outside father's door, too. "I do call that considerate and thoughtful."

Edith nibbled her biscuit and sipped the fragrant tea with a sort of unwilling comfort, making no reply to my expressions of appreciation.

I hope I was not hard upon my sister in those trying days! I trust I have not said anything about her which would cause people to think less kindly of her than she deserves, for she is a good girl, and possesses a kind and affectionate heart. I am afraid I did not feel with her in her trouble about Mary as truly as I might have done. There came a time when my deepest sympathy was hers, and I could then see, as I had not been able to before, how unsisterly, in face of all the circumstances, must have seemed my constant defence of my friend. But the worst of me (or the best, according to how you look at it!) is my tendency in everything to go in for what Keith euphemistically terms "the complete porker." I had taken to Mary, and given her my sincerest affection, therefore my confidence in her was perfect,—unshakable, as I then thought. Later, when

events transpired which I now could not have believed possible—but I must not approach that future yet. Suffice it to say that this experience taught me one thing which I think I shall never forget—how that love "believeth all things, hopeth all things," and "thinketh no evil." It is such real pain to us to see wrong in those we deeply care for, that we will endure anything, excuse anything, explain away everything rather than acknowledge or even suspect them unworthy. Judged by this standard, the number of our fellow-creatures whom we truly love is shockingly few!

For weeks we dwelt under the shadow of a double anxiety. Edric Moore lay sick almost unto death. Although, in the first excitement attending the 'bus accident, he had seemed, and indeed believed himself to have escaped with but a few bruises, exerting himself on behalf of his suffering fellow-travellers, and especially father, yet it was subsequently proved that he was actually the most seriously injured of all who had been in or upon that ill-fated vehicle, not excepting the man with a fractured skull, whom he had feared was dead.

As for poor dear father, a few visits to the oculist sufficed to realise our worst dread—the sight of one eye was entirely destroyed, and that of the other, from the curious sympathy which exists between corresponding organs of the human body, was only too likely to follow. Only by perfect rest and the greatest care could it be hoped that, at my father's time of life, the precious faculty could be saved.

This was a great blow to us in more ways than one. Father, through the favour of an old friend, had been provided with light clerical employment at a salary which, though pitifully small, was a boon to us. But, without his eyesight, there was no further prospect of his being able to earn a single penny. Keith's "rise" did not amount to more than one-fourth of what father's little income had been, and how we were to keep a roof over our heads in future was a problem which none of us could solve.

Once more Edith said "Mary must go," and now I could not reasonably offer any resistance. But once again was this, to me, sad catastrophe averted in an unlooked-for way.

Keith came home one evening with an idea, as he said, for me. "I don't know whether you'll think anything of it, Sis," he observed; "but it struck me as worth mentioning. You wouldn't be above earning a bit of money, I know."

"I should only be too thankful!" I cried. "If there was anything in the world that I could do that was worth money. What is it?"

"An old lady—great aunt, or elderly second cousin, or something of Morley's—wants somebody to go and be with her every day, to sit with her and read to her. Must be a good reader, Morley said, whatever else she is, or isn't; and walk by the side of her bath-chair when she takes her airing, and so forth."

"I can read well, I believe," I said. "It is my one accomplishment."

"And an uncommonly pleasant one," added Keith. "Well, I thought of you directly. It is only to be a temporary engagement, I understood—just while her own regular companion goes off for a month or six weeks' holiday with a relation of her own, who has been ill. But she's a good old soul, he told me, and generally tips up well."

"A temporary engagement would be better than none," I said—"perhaps even more convenient for me than a permanent one. In the course of a month or six weeks we shall see how father gets on, and whether there is any possibility of his going back to Ward and Townsend's. The only difficulty is about the housekeeping."

"There's Mary," answered Keith, conclusively.

"Edith is bent on sending Mary away."

"Edith be—ahem!—brought to a better mind, then!" returned my brother, with warmth. "Well, anyhow, she can't go at present. It would be simple madness to let this chance of earning a pound or two slip by, and it might lead on to some other opening—who knows? And I've got you the old lady's address."

Thus was the case represented to Edith, who did not offer so much objection to it as I had anticipated. With some shrewdness she forecasted that perhaps the regular companion's sick relative might not be able to spare her to return to her situation at all, and in that event I, if I suited, might permanently fill her place—a much more desirable method of adding to our income, especially from her point of view, than by lessening our expenses in doing without domestic help.

"Mary had better stay on, at least till we see what comes of this—supposing, of course, that you and the old lady like each other," she said. "She is certainly a splendid worker, I will admit that."

She had never alluded to the incident which had so angered her since the day of its occurrence; neither, of course, had I. We had had something else both to think of and to talk about. It was only quite lately, too, that she had been allowed a few minutes' conversation with Edric—he had been too ill even to speak to her; so there was no need to wonder whether she had mentioned the matter to him. I was already hoping that it would be allowed to quietly slide into oblivion.

But my confession to Keith respecting Edith's intentions with regard to Mary, had the effect of precipitating another event which previously had seemed very far away.

How it came about, I never quite knew; but, running down our little garden between the lights, to plant a few lily-bulbs a neighbour had given us, I found them both absorbed in examining one currant bush, and speculating on the probable crop of fruit.

There were only five clusters of flowers on it, all told, so Mary could hardly have needed the assistance of Keith's mathematical mind to arrive at an approximate notion of the number of berries likely to follow; but that was the explanation she gave of their propinquity at the moment I came upon them.

Keith gazed away to where the clothes-line next door but one, fringed with juvenile stockings, stood out clear against the sunset sky; Mary bent lower over the currant bush, but her pretty little ear, nestling among a perfect fuzz of soft little curls, was pink as a rose, and I began to laugh.

It was that laugh which broke the spell.

"It's all right," said Keith. "We didn't mean anybody to know—at least, not yet. But we don't mind you. Only, don't tell!"

Then I put my arms round Mary and kissed her, and told her how glad I was, and how I would rather it should be she than anyone else in the world. And she kissed me back, but I don't think she said one word. Then Keith begged me again to keep their secret. He looked radiantly happy. Of course, I promised faithfully, and arm in arm we walked back to the house. "Father, at least, will be pleased when he knows," I said.

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CHAPTER VIII.

THE BLOW DESCENDS.

I DULY presented myself to the old lady, Mrs. Perry, whom Keith's friend had mentioned to him, and a very charming old lady I found her.

She would be eighty-three on the next anniversary of the battle of Waterloo, she told me, beamingly, three times during our first interview, "if the dear Lord spared her as long." She had had eleven children, and nine of them were still alive—more beamingly—and (most beamingly of all) her grandchildren numbered thirty-three! She beamed over everything, did this sunny little lady; she had bright eyes, albeit past their use for fine work, or reading; her cheeks were rosy and smiling, her bunches of silvery white ringlets shook and bobbed with every movement of her head; for she was slightly palsied, but even that seemed, in her, to be attractive.

She began calling me "love," and "dearie," at once, and became so conversational on the subject of her family affairs, that I had some difficulty in steering her round to the main business of my visit. I then found that she apparently forgot everything I said to her, and likewise everything she said herself, about three minutes after it was uttered. But, somehow, I was engaged, and undertook to commence my duties the following week. The remuneration was to be most generous, and I returned home as happy as was consistent with the lively apprehension that the dear old lady might possibly engage half-a-dozen other applicants on the same terms, and become blissfully oblivious of the whole transaction with me long before Monday morning should arrive.

But it turned out that my fears were needless. I punctually kept my appointment, and was welcomed literally with open arms. My first service was to pick up certain dropped stitches in Mrs. Perry's knitting—she was constantly engaged in the manufacture of ample scarlet comforters for the Deep Sea Fishermen—and while I was thus employed, she entertained me with a fresh recital of her age, the date of her marriage, the length of her wedded life, the number of her descendants, etc. She would look up at me with a most ingenuous and gleeful smile, eyes twinkling and curls nodding every time she confided to me that profound secret, her age, and I soon found that I was expected to show perennial astonishment thereat—an innocent piece of hypocrisy, surely, since it afforded her so much gratification.

The principal class of reading required of me was—will the good reader be too much shocked?—*not* sermons, or reports of religious societies, but story-books of the kind that delighted Edith and me when in our teens. The dear old soul would follow the fate of the persecuted lovers with an absorbing interest which I almost envied, wiping away surreptitious tears over their anguish, and exulting with joy when the last chapter infallibly restored them to one another's arms. But she forgot it all as soon as heard, and each time I began afresh, after an interval of other occupations, I had to give her a synopsis of all that had gone before. She was, however, so unfailingly sunny and grateful and pleased with all that one did for her, that nothing would have seemed any trouble. I had an idea from the first that she had taken rather a fancy to me, and this was subsequently confirmed by the report Keith received through his friend. I was very thankful. It was a proof of our difficulties not being unseen or unheeded by our Father in heaven, that this pleasant little bit of employment should have been put in my way just at the time of our greatest need.

At home, things were going on swimmingly. Mary was mistress during the greater part of the day, and managed as I verily believed no one but Mary could. The house was always in speckless order, and Mary herself in spotless trim. And she tended father, as he said, like a daughter.

But it was in the management of the housekeeping money, which circumstances now compelled us to place in her hands, that her extraordinary genius became most evident. The sum was less, perforce, than it had ever been before, for come what might (and go what must!) we were determined not to get into debt; and yet we certainly lived better than we had done since the good old days of plenty.

How she did it was a mystery. A piece of bacon, for instance, that cost less than a shilling, provided us all with a good dinner one Saturday, with sandwiches for Keith to take to the city with him on Monday, and slices for breakfast and supper till about the middle of the week. Bigger eggs now graced our table at ten for sixpence than I had been able to procure at five farthings each, with a result that Edith, whose appetite was bad, could have one with her toast every morning.

Father had been ordered unlimited beef-tea, but we certainly could not have had it, in the existing state of our exchequer, had not Mary discovered a method of making one pound of meat at sixpence yield a large cup of strong essence (and father assured us it really was delicious) morning and evening for a week. I had made beef-tea myself for Mary while she was ill, so I was able to judge how superior her recipe must be. In fact, I was the one member of the family really qualified to duly appreciate Mary's housekeeping skill, having had some experience in that line myself. Father and Keith, however, constantly praised the quantity and quality of the *ménage* under Mary's rule, and Edith could not but express agreeable surprise at the low sum total of the bills sent in.

I was so glad. For had not father been well nourished at that trying time when he was suffering so much with his eyes, I feel sure it might have shortened his life by some years; while as for poor old Keith, my heart had ached for him many a time, for I could see that he was getting quite thin. Although he had always bravely declared that *he* was "all right," I am certain that he had not had enough to eat for months. Bread-and-butter for breakfast, a bit of something cold at mid-day, bread-and-butter again at tea, and a scrap of cheese as a change at supper, isn't much for a sturdy,

hard-working fellow in the prime of youth. It was a treat to see him enjoy the dainty dishes which Mary so economically prepared. I could not help thinking of the old-world story of the cruse of oil and barrel of meal, and feeling that our Mary was indeed proving "an angel unawares."

Edith had a ten-days' holiday at Whitsuntide. I could not help wondering how she and our help would get on when they passed the day together. But I was not left long in doubt.

On arriving home on the second evening of Edith's vacation, the door was opened to me by father, his eyes still covered by a dark bandage.

"Oh, why did you come, father dear?" I asked; for I was always afraid lest, feeling his way about blindfold, he might strike himself against something and be hurt.

"Mary is upstairs," he answered. "I'm afraid Edith and she have had a little unpleasantness."

I must say it looked like it, for there was no sign of supper about, and not a light anywhere in the house.

I ran upstairs to Mary, not to Edith.

The voice in which she answered my tap at the door was hard and cold. I entered, however, and stood thunder-struck to see drawers and cupboard open and empty, while Mary with knit brow and compressed lips was tightening the last knot in the cord around her trunk. She did not look round at my approach.

"*Mary!*" I exclaimed, "what is the matter?"

She stood up then, but still did not face me. Her clear-cut profile looked pale and hard as marble.

"I'm going," she said. "A man is coming for my box at eight."

"Not to-night," I gasped! "Not late at night! *Where* are you going?"

"Anywhere away from here! The farther the better," was the uncompromising reply.

After a moment or two, she turned abruptly, held out a stiff hand, and said, "Good-bye!"

(To be continued.)

EASTER MORNING.

LAPPED in the fragrance of a garden's bloom,
Night's dewy tears fell 'neath the rayless gloom,
Where slept the Lord, within the silent tomb.

O glorious day! that burst the bars of night,
And shone resplendent with effulgence bright,
With life and immortality and light!

The Lord is risen indeed! Above Him streams
The golden light of morn, whose radiant beams
Illume the shining lilies with their gleams.

Glorious the garden where Thy sacred head
Reposed among the lilies, with the dead;
Blessèd the grave through which Thy feet have led.

Glad Easter Morn, on which the Lord arose!
As o'er our dying world Thy beauty glows,
Thy mystery of joy to us disclose.

O Thou, who art the Life, the Truth, the Way,
Thou Sun of righteousness! shine forth, we pray,
And make our hearts to bloom, on Easter Day!

MARY WYETH.

DO WE STARVE OUR CHILDREN?

IN an American paper there appeared a little time ago a comparison between the English and the American systems of feeding children. From the statements made, it appears that, give the average schoolboy his choice, and he would not, like a certain voracious sailor, elect to remain an Englishman.

The American child breakfasts off rich and highly-spiced dishes, has stewed oysters and ice-cream to any extent for lunch, and enjoys a dinner that is like a Christmas dream every day. The writer then declares that there is not a moment in the life of an English child when he is not hungry; that he will not complain at being disturbed in his first sleep if the awakening is compensated by bread and jam; and that never, through all the eager years of growth, does he know the sensation of satisfied appetite.

Perhaps this is an over-statement, but certainly, from the trans-atlantic point of view, the British routine of bread and milk, or oatmeal porridge, roast mutton and rice pudding, seems little short of starvation. But what is the result? The Englishman has at least a fair hygienic start in life; he does not greatly suffer from indigestion before he is forty, while the average American is a dyspeptic from his youth up. Climate may to some extent be responsible for this, together with the strain and stress of life occasioned by a merciless competition, but who can doubt that this early over-feeding is at the root of all the trouble?

Not that we recommend the starvation of children; on the contrary, we think that some parents are a little too anxious to guard against the dangers of repletion, and that some well-meant books err in fixing the exact number of ounces a child should eat at a given age. The average child has a much more accurate indicator within himself, and while the food set before him is plain and wholesome the internal test may safely be trusted. It is only when the taste for bread and butter vanishes while the taste for cake remains in full force, that interference is necessary, and to keep a child sound and strong, abundance of exercise is better than scarcity of food.

Here our American cousins misjudge us. We do not, as they fancy, starve our children, but we insist on their working off their food by physical activity. On the food question we look beyond the palate. Breakfast and dinner are not mere gratifications, they are powerful aids to bone and muscle; so let the pampered American tantalise us as he will with "terrapin" and ice-cream and candy, we may safely continue to restrict our children's diet to the things which make bone and muscle of the best.

OLD HUNGARIAN WORK.

BY JOSEPHA CRANE, AUTHOR OF "BULGARIAN EMBROIDERY," ETC.

AT first sight the colours used in old Hungarian embroidery are somewhat startling—Navy blue, Turkey red, and a dull ochre yellow; and yet they all contrast so well together that the effect is extremely handsome. This work is done by the peasants in Hungary, and is used by them for the decoration of their dresses, aprons, etc. Artistic people have copied the designs and introduced the embroidery generally into England, adapting it to the ornamentation of tea-cloths, mats, sachets, aprons, table-centres, work-bags, cosies, and other articles.

This work will recommend itself to many of our readers, as it is very easy to learn, very quickly executed, and extremely inexpensive.

The material used for old Hungarian work is coarse linen, not white but a dull kind of whitey-brown. Fine linen does not answer the purpose well, and dead white is too hard for these daring colours.

The beautiful embroidery—which looks, as someone said once, like old brocade—is done on nothing but cotton. This cotton is called *coton à repriser* of D.M.C. make, and it is used as you cut it off the balls, four threads being in the strand. It is not easy to obtain, excepting from Miss Baker, 5, Clifton Gardens, Chiswick, W., who makes Hungarian work her speciality. On receipt of a stamped envelope she will send a price list, and the receiver of this will see that all kinds of articles can be had ready traced, and if desired begun, and the cotton provided at threepence per ball.

The designs are true Hungarian and have a decided character of their own. A very excellent specimen of the style is seen in the chair-back given in our illustration.

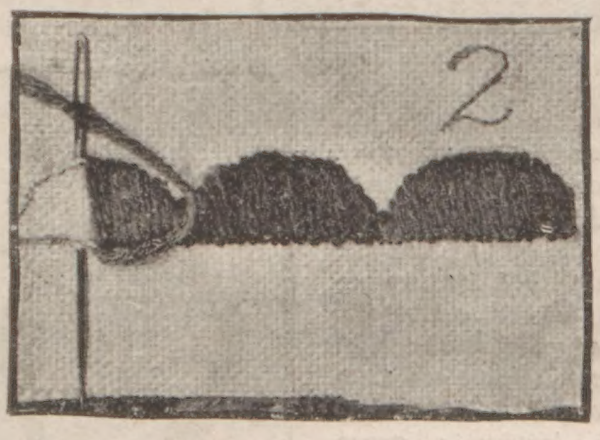
The needles used are coarse crewel or fine tapestry needles, care being always taken to have a needle the eye of which carries the cotton easily.

In this chair-back the large centre flower is done in dark blue with a line of red up each leaf, the middle being red. The stem in all the design is blue, and the leaves are done in one of the three colours. The scallopped border is done in alternate scallops of red, blue, and yellow. This is done in button-hole stitch, as explained later.

Nothing can be simpler than the stitches, and they are very few in number, but if carelessly executed they are not at all pretty.

The pattern is never outlined by any running, and no padding is used.

In fig. 1 you see how the button-hole scallop is worked. Keep the cotton under your needle and let each stitch



lie closely to the one before it, as nothing of the material must be seen.

If you draw your cotton too tightly, you make as great a fault as if you let it lie too loosely.

In Hungarian work you often find scallops used

Chair-Back in Old Hungarian Work.

which are not button-holed, as in the large curved leaf of the chair-back with its open centre. You also find them worked inwards round cloths, etc., the material being then turned close in under the edge and Russian or torchon lace sewn all round.

In fig. 2 you see how these scallops are done in simple flat stitch. In borders you sometimes see the colours used in twos and threes of the scallops.

In fig. 3 you see the blanket-stitch used for the sides of the chair-back. The edge of the material is turned down and then you work the button-hole stitch, leaving a space between each cluster of three stitches.

In fig. 4 you see how the bars for open spaces are done. Here the cotton is used double. The stitches must be quite straight and the same amount of space left between each.

In fig. 5 you see how the bars are caught down with a single back-stitch,

which is always done in a contrasting colour.

In fig. 6 is a leaf done in slanting flat or satin-stitch, for it is called by both names. The leaves can be worked slanting or straight across as you please. This leaf is begun in the stem with stem-stitch, which is so well known that I have not given an illustration of it. However, if anyone wishes to know how it is done, I will quote some very excellent directions for doing it: "This is identical with the stitch so much used in crewel work, and is employed for stems, and for veining up the centre of leaves and flowers. To work, commence at the bottom of the stem or leaf and work upwards, bring the needle and cotton in front of the material, then insert the needle in the material in a slanting direction from right to left above the cotton, and keeping the cotton to the right of the needle, draw through, take another stitch above in the same manner through only sufficient material to hold the stitch, and continue, making all the

Fig. 6.

stitches the same size, not too closely together, and not drawing the thread too closely."

Fig. 7 shows a leaf worked in another way. A careful examination of our illustration is the best way of learning how to do it. When both sides of the leaf are done, then put a line or two of stem-stitch up the middle in a different colour from that in which the leaf is worked.

Fig. 8 shows the way in which balls are worked. These are a great feature in old Hungarian work, and are often done all in yellow. Always have the line of stitches in the balls, going the same way in a piece of work.

Of the three colours employed, less is often used of the yellow than of the red and blue, but that is a matter of taste.

This work cleans very well and can be washed if carefully managed, but no soap with alkali should be used.

When you have finished a piece of work you should damp and iron it carefully, using a hot iron and placing a blanket under the ironing-cloth. It is always a good plan to iron your scallops before cutting them out. I am sure that those who try this fascinating work will be very much charmed with it. It has this great advantage, that at a very small cost it enables you to work very charming articles for your home, and that is well worth thinking about. A shabby chair can have some of its infirmities hidden by a pretty chair-back, a nice work-bag is ornamental to hold your knitting, and your afternoon tea

Fig. 8.

looks very much nicer if you have an artistic cloth and cosy, both being embroidered to match if you desire it. In a bed-room a nice bed-spread is very decorative, and this, let me remind you, can be done in sections and then joined together. This method is very much handier than carrying about a large piece of work, and you can get the article done in a very short time if you employ a few leisure moments in putting in some stitches.

"HOUSE" AND "HOME."

MY business frequently takes me into other people's houses; and, being a woman, I cannot help sometimes making mental note of things that perhaps do not concern me in my official capacity. One thing in particular that has often struck me in my visits is the difference that exists between "house" and "home." Let me explain what I mean.

I shall never forget trying once to gain an entrance at the front door of a certain large, fine-looking house. Not being successful, I went round to the kitchen door. A little, withered, sallow woman, with about as much life and sparkle as an Egyptian mummy, cautiously admitted me into a cheerless room. She said her children were at school, her husband at work, and she found the house such a care and she had *so* much to do, that she spent the greater part of her time in the kitchen. "And then," she said, "you know children drag in so much dirt, and men are so careless, that we make this the living room."

"But of what use is your great house, then?" said I.

"Oh, well, when the children are grown up we shall need it," she replied.

As I left, I turned to look at the house, and mentally exclaimed, "When the children are grown—to what?" Deprived of the freedom, beauty, and joyousness of a home, kept in the odour of the frying and boiling, but, worse than all, shut up in the asphyxiating atmosphere of thought so narrowing and petrifying; living under the influence of a mind recognising only the existence of "dirt" and "work"—"when they are grown," will it be into the full stature of mind and body? If "the joy of the spirit indicates its strength," such a house can send forth only weaklings, and it would be more than a miracle that could transform it into a real home.

Proceeding a little further, I came to a vine-covered cottage with blinds flung wide open; the flowers blowing in the breeze seemed to be nodding a glad good morning; the birds were twittering, chirping, and singing on the eaves of the porch, and there was such an air of cheerfulness about the place that I involuntarily repeated a verse from Faber: "All God-like things are joyous. They have touched God, and so they carry with them everywhere an irresistible gladness." The bell was promptly answered by a bright, intelligent-looking woman of middle age, and when she bade me enter, there was such a tone of sweet content in her voice that it filled me with delight. After accomplishing my errand I rose to go, saying as I did so, "Your home is very attractive."

She replied with animation: "I try to make it so. I keep this little verse pinned up where I can see it every morning: 'Let us make our lives songs, brave, cheery, tender, and true, that shall sing themselves into other lives, and help to lighten burdens and cares.' With that text in my thought I try to be the light of home, cheering and helping my husband in every way, and I keep my children so close to me in sympathy and love that they have no secrets from mother, and I tell them as tenderly as I can of the pitfalls that lie in their pathway, and try to make right thinking, right being, and right doing so attractive in the daily life, that we may have no fears for their future."

As I looked back upon that home, the benediction of Heaven seemed to rest upon it, for the life of that mother was not centred in self, but in the highest good of all around her.

There is no lack of artistic decoration nowadays, for even the home of the poorly-paid labourer may have an air of prettiness, and Bridget may find a gay tidy or a bit of bright ribbon "to please the children." There is much attention paid to the cooking, the table and its appointments; and, in fact, speaking generally, we live in far greater refinement and comfort than the people of any past age. But do we not sometimes forget that strange, silent influence, which, for good or evil, surrounds each one of us in our home life? There is a subtle and inexplicable permeating *something* that makes itself felt in every home; in some it is chilling, in some depressing, in others it is an inspiration and an aspiration; "for that which we are, we express not voluntarily but involuntarily."

Therefore, build beautiful homes, embody your highest ideals in your environment; but let your habitual thought be of finer quality than the rarest china, the warp and woof of character, and a more perfect web than the costliest silk or velvet. Let the genial hospitality and social attractions be formidable rivals to outside allurements, and the radiating influence of such a home will extend farther and be more powerful to counteract the darkness of error and immorality than are the dazzling rays of the electric light to dispel the blackness of the night. G. H.

Precious Words.—A case is mentioned of a young man, the son of a widowed mother, who left to her, upon his departure from this life, these precious words: "Dear mother, I have never deceived you; you can always trust me. I have had temptations more than you could bear to hear, but I have resisted them." There are such young men in nearly every community, who are living a pure and honest life. How much the mothers of such sons have to do in making such noble men God only knows; but He does know, and that is sufficient. How great is the sum of all the good one true mother can give to the world!

* * * *

Make Your Friends "At Home."—There is no hospitality in a display beyond our means. It deceives no one, least of all our friends, who are likely to be embarrassed by our extravagance. If we would be true hosts we must live true lives day by day, so that we shall not be ashamed to set a plate at our table at any time for the passing guest.

THE "MAKING" OF POULTRY.

BY KATE M. MACARTNEY, AUTHOR OF "A NOTABLE IRISH INDUSTRY," ETC.

Artificial Feeding.

THERE can be no question that poultry in general is one of the choicest delicacies of the table, and a plump, tender chicken is a feast for an epicure. Unfortunately, the toothsome "fowl" is nowadays the portion of only the well-to-do, except on high-days and holidays, when the poor man may, perchance, be able to indulge his taste in this direction. Not that this need be so. I have known many a farm labourer's wife in the country who has contrived to keep and rear a good-sized brood, and so has been able every now and then to enjoy a surplus pullet. My present purpose, however, is not merely to sing the praises of a choice article of food, but rather to give an account of a visit to a charming spot, where what I may term the "making" of poultry is carried on as quite a lucrative business.

A short while ago I received and accepted an invitation to visit some good friends living in Sussex. When I arrived, I found that my staying-place was not far from the village of Heathfield. I had heard much of Heathfield and its poultry, and it was not long before I became very deeply interested in the peculiar industry. My first experience was gained quite unexpectedly. Taking a walk in the district, I was considerably struck by the presence of cocks and hens everywhere. Down the lanes, in the gardens, about the cottages, and even inside many of the houses, the domestic fowl was to be met with. It seemed as though a craze—and a very practical one!—had infected the inhabitants, and that their sole ambition was to rear poultry. Go where I might, the shrill notes of chanticleer, the "cluck-cluck" of mother hens, and the "peep-peep" of little chicks saluted my ears. If it was not a proud cock-bird strutting about amongst his humble feathered admirers, it was an anxious mother confined within some improvised wooden coop, and calling distractedly to her wayward chicks, that I encountered.

I soon got to know that poultry-raising is the staple industry of Heathfield and the surrounding districts. Thousands of chickens are reared, and as though these were not enough, thousands more of young ones are brought into the place to be "developed" for market. These are imported from several parts of Ireland, mostly during the months from November to May. Then there is a class of traders called "higglers," who drive round the neighbouring country to purchase yet more birds. These men use a light cart, in which are a number of crates, and call at all the farmhouses and cottages they pass, buying up as many spare young birds as they can obtain.

For a short time the chicks are allowed to run about and pick up food to the top of their bent. And very well they thrive. This part of Sussex seems to be peculiarly favourable to the rearing of poultry. Then, when the chickens are verging on maturity, the owner steps in, and what may be aptly termed the "making" of the poultry is begun.

I had previously seen an artificial incubator, which hatched fowls without the aid of a hen, and that was sufficiently astonishing; but I must confess that I was even more surprised at the method of fattening adopted at Heathfield. To an outsider it is both novel and peculiar. Whether it is as satisfactory to the birds as to the pocket of the owner is a matter of considerable doubt: I can only state what I saw, believing the facts to be of interest to the reader.

The exact time for the commencement of the fattening process having arrived

"Stubbers" at Work.

The Carrier's Cart.

—in spring, this is when the chicks are about thirteen weeks old, or a little more when the season is advanced—the "manufacture" of the chickens is begun. A long range of wooden coops is erected on poles, three or four feet from the ground. Into each of these cage-like structures a number of birds are put, and there they are kept for at least three weeks. During this time they are regularly fed twice a day, on most nourishing and fattening food, such as ground oats, fat, and milk. They are not allowed to pick and choose in the matter of feeding. An attendant has the control of this, and to facilitate his work he uses a curious machine. On the top of a simple wheeled carriage a pot is fixed, containing food. In connection with the pot is a feeding-tube, through which the food can be pumped by means of a lever worked by the foot.

Wheeling this machine amongst the coops under his charge, the man gently seizes a bird, and, holding it to his left side, dexterously inserts the feeding-tube into its mouth, and carefully pumps a quantity of food into the crop. Practice makes perfect, and the whole process, so deft is the handling, is wonderfully rapid.

Under this peculiar system of dieting, the birds become extremely plump and fleshy, and are soon in a right condition for the market. London dealers demand "full fat" chickens, whilst the less favoured kind are sent to various provincial centres. But there is still the killing and plucking to be done, and this task is executed quite as expeditiously as the daily cramming. Formerly a class of men called "chicken butchers" were employed, and these experts went from farm to farm, prosecuting their calling. Now the farmer and his men generally do the work.

On a certain day a number of the fowls are put in a big crate, and conveyed at once to an out-building. Death is well-nigh instantaneous, and in a few moments the bird is on the lap of one of the men, being picked. A huge basket is placed near by, and into this the feathers are dropped. The larger feathers are kept separate, as they are intended for millinery purposes later; whilst the small ones are packed and forwarded to the principal feather-bed makers.

As soon as the pickers have done their part, the birds are passed on to the "stubbers." These are usually girls, who, armed with a short sharp knife, go over the fowl and clear it of all the "stubs," or feather-roots, and such things as the pickers have missed. Having done this, the "dresser" completes the process. With swiftness and care he takes each chicken and presses it into a presentable shape. Much smoothing, and patting, and pressing are required before he is satisfied, and a dusting of flour is added as a finish. Then he places a number of the fowls in a very primitive press, that they may retain their approved shape. This "press," by the way, is a kind of trough in the shape of a letter V. The bodies only of the birds are put in it—their heads hanging loose—and on top is a plain deal board kept down with heavy weights. A few hours of such pressing renders the birds fit for distribution and subsequent sale.

As I have said, poultry in large quantities is sent from Heathfield to many parts of the kingdom. Consequently the carrier is in much demand. In fact, all day long his cart may be seen going to and from the railway station. It is said that as much as eighty tons of poultry have been purveyed by rail from this place in a week, which would mean something like 40,000 birds! Imagine the labour that such a huge output must entail! Food from the miller's, materials for fowl-houses, cases for packing, and many necessary odds and ends must be procured and utilised to ensure such vast results. Truly, the peculiar Sussex industry of poultry "making" is a big, interesting study.

A Pair of "Pickers."

HOW GIRLS CAN EARN THEIR LIVING.

BY CLEMENTINA BLACK, AUTHOR OF "MATCH-BOX MAKING AT HOME," ETC.

II.—NURSING.

URSING differs from most skilled callings in not requiring to be entered upon at a particularly early age. Few of the larger hospitals take probationers under twenty-four years, and most will receive them up to the age of thirty. Much book-learning is not essential, and women who feel themselves somewhat below the ever-rising standard of school acquisition may find in nursing a vocation no less useful to the community and honourable to themselves than is that of teaching.

Certain qualities are absolutely necessary for a nurse, and among these health stands first. No woman who is not strong and healthy will be taken on as a probationer in any good training school, and in the majority there is a period of trial at the end of which the probationer may be rejected if she is not considered physically equal to the task required of her. And, indeed, the provision is a wise one, for there are no workers who labour more arduously than the nurses in a large hospital. The hours, it is true, are not so long as they used until recently to be, but twelve hours on duty is still a very usual stretch, and less than ten is the exception. Then, in addition to the actual work of the ward, there are lectures to be attended, notes taken, and examinations to be prepared for.

Moreover, to women not accustomed to them, the surroundings of hospital life are in themselves extremely exhausting. A very young, delicate, and nervous girl is totally unfitted for such a life. To some people, sick nursing remains, in spite of all experience, an occupation cruelly wearing to the nerves; there are temperaments which never cease to suffer acutely in witnessing every pang of pain in another; and keen imaginations which feel for every fresh patient rather more than less vividly as time goes on. The woman of this temperament will find her work full of agonies, and she will, after all, never be a first rate nurse. On the other hand, a sense of duty alone will not make a good nurse.

There are women who take naturally to sick nursing, to whom the ill person is instinctively, as it were, more interesting than the person who is quite well. If a girl is observed, even as a little child, to move quietly in a sick-room, to speak gently but easily, to sit down contentedly by an invalid, and in short, to show herself at home there, that girl has the making of a nurse. The gift does not belong to all women, whatever the poets may choose to say about it, and it by no means follows that its absence shows a lack of feeling or of affection for the patient. Indeed, one reason why home nursing is generally less successful than that of the nurse who comes from outside, is that the near relative is apt to be over-anxious. Good nursing requires a certain calmness of mind remote alike from indifference and from excessive anxiety.

Granted, then, that a woman has the right kind of temperament for nursing, and possesses the necessary physical strength, what should be her first step? I should say, to buy and study a little book called "How to Become a Nurse," by Miss Honnor Morton (published by the Scientific Press, 428, Strand, London, W.C.). Be careful to get the latest edition, for there have been three, and of course the earlier ones are no longer quite up to date. This useful little handbook gives the names and conditions of admittance of all the institutions in which a nurse can be trained. The careful consideration of all these openings ought to lead to a wise choice; but it is not enough to choose and to apply. Nursing is a profession for which the applicants are always in excess of the vacancies; and a would-be nurse may have long to wait before she can enter an institution which seems to her really satisfactory. In nearly all cases the probationer will receive board, lodging, and a varying amount of uniform and washing; in some she will have to pay a fee; in some she will receive payment, although at a very modest rate.

Unless immediate self-support is an absolute necessity, choice of a training school should not be influenced by consideration of the small salary procurable during the first year. The true capital of a nurse is the possession of the best possible training, and it is quite false economy to put up with the second best for the sake of perhaps twelve pounds. At the end of one, two, or three years, according to the rules of the particular establishment in which she studies, a nurse is able to obtain a certificate, and she then takes the position of a "trained nurse." No one who really means to excel in her profession ought to content herself with less than three years of hospital training, and among the most experienced matrons, nurses, and heads of institutions a nurse who has not completed her three years is very properly not regarded as altogether a full-blown nurse.

The three years over, what shall the trained nurse do? She may either remain at her hospital in hopes of attaining the post of Sister, and perhaps getting an appointment as matron to one of the many smaller or special hospitals, or she may become one of the staff of a private nursing institution (either in connection with the hospital where she has been trained, or "run" by some private individual), or she may go into business independently on her own account. The salaries of hospital nurses are about the same as those of domestic servants; the salaries of Sisters will be, speaking roughly, about thirty or thirty-five pounds a year. Matrons, in a few cases, make really good incomes, although far smaller ones than any successful man would expect to get for work of equal responsibility and importance.

The nursing institutions are commercial undertakings, existing for the purpose of making profits for the hospital or individual who controls them. The custom is to board and lodge the nurses when not engaged upon cases, and to pay them at a fixed yearly rate. This rate, until a few years ago, was on an average twenty five pounds a year, while the average charge to patients for the services of a nurse was two guineas a week. A nurse who was at cases for forty weeks in the year would thus earn

eighty-four pounds and receive twenty-five. The difference appeared to some practical-minded ladies to form a somewhat excessive charge for ten weeks' board and lodging, and the services of a registry office. They joined together to form the Nurses' Co-operation, a nursing institution supplying only highly-trained nurses and managed mainly by the nurses themselves. The peculiarity of this institution is that each nurse gets the money paid for her services, less a charge of seven per cent. for expenses of management, and if this seven per cent. is not all used, the surplus is spent according to the decision of the nurses themselves.

This institution has now existed for five years and has been extremely successful. Its greatest success, however, resides in the fact that since it came into existence, nearly every large London nursing institution has raised its rates of pay, and many have also added a percentage upon earnings. The address of the Nurses' Co-operation is 8, New Cavendish Street, London, W., and every private nurse ought to belong to it. If it is not of importance to herself to receive fair pay for her work, yet she should be careful that, by accepting less, she does not help so to bring down the general rate as to impose hardships upon those who have to live and to provide for the future by their own earnings. Moreover, it behoves every woman who has at heart the honour of her calling to support those institutions which, like the Nurses' Co-operation, maintain a high standard of qualification.

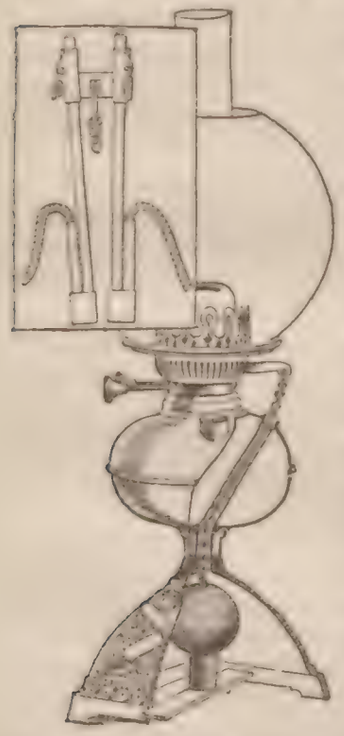
To those for whom a livelihood is not a primary object, I would say: "Use your knowledge to make things better." The nursing and the pay in many workhouse infirmaries are far below the proper standards; a capable woman who would go into one of these and devote herself to making known and getting remedied the evils would deserve well of her whole country. In the same way, there are asylums for the insane in which the nursing is reported to be insufficient and often unskilled. The nurses, whose living depends upon their silence, dare not—the unfortunate patients cannot, complain; a skilled nurse who would serve for six months could make representations to the authorities responsible, with much chance of being listened to, since the fear of publicity would stand behind her.

Finally, there are in every town and village sickness and sanitary ignorance; in some, district nurses and nurses employed by various religious agencies are already doing admirable work, but the skilled woman who can afford to give her time—and to *give* does not bring down rates of pay in the same manner as to undersell does—can always find a small province of misery which she can take for her private cultivation.

NOVEL NOTIONS.

A SAFETY OIL-LAMP.

THIS lamp and burner, named the "Perfect," has now been on sale for some time. The two burning wicks of a duplex burner are carried in metal tubes that fit closely to the bottom of the oil reservoir. Thus the wicks cannot ignite the oil in the reservoir. But the chief improvement is the automatic extinguisher, which is brought into play if the lamp is upset. This is achieved by the free arm of a lever extinguisher attached to a brass chain which is carried in a narrow tube through the oil reservoir, and holding at its lower end a heavy ball of lead. This ball rests upon a socket in the centre of the lamp below the burner; and if displaced, as it inevitably is as soon as the lamp is inclined to any serious extent out of the perpendicular, by its own weight it brings the extinguisher into action, and puts out the light. Lamps of every shape and size can be had with this safety attachment.



A USEFUL PAIL TRAY.

The "Little Friend" soap tray, designed by a lady to fit housemaids' pails and washing baths, is a novelty which will at once commend itself to all good housewives. The article is made of metal, well perforated, and by means of clips it can be attached in a minute to the rim of any pail or bath. It will hold soap, flannel, or brush, and thus save the worker from groping for these in the water, as well as prevent waste of soap. With this pail-tray in use, the risk of the annoyance of drains being stopped up by a stray flannel or brush will be considerably reduced; while the necessary articles for cleaning can be kept all together.

FOLDING TOOTH-BRUSHES.

One of the latest conveniences devised for those who may be going from home is that of a folding tooth-brush. The ivory handle is made in such a way that it stops a short distance from the head of the brush. Here it is hinged into a metal case, which serves as a protection for the brush when it is not in use, and as a handle when it is open. One's tooth-brush may thus be tucked away into the smallest possible space.

COMPRESSED TEA.

Travellers who like to carry their own tea, will appreciate the new Tea Tabloids. By careful chemical compression of good tea these little cakes are produced, and it is claimed that the bane of tea-lovers, noxious tannin, is excluded. The tabloids are dropped into a cup, which is then filled with boiling water, stirred, and milk and sugar added according to taste.

*** Readers wishing for further information about these Novel Notions are invited to write to the Editor at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., enclosing a stamped envelope for reply.

"HE TOOK THEM UP IN HIS ARMS."

BY MARGARET SCOTT HAYCRAFT.

OH, weary, patient fingers
From task to task that move,
That wipe the tears of sorrow
With gentle touch of love,
That tend the little children,
That comfort, clothe, and feed,
And minister for ever
To daily, hourly need!
Oh, tender mother-fingers,
So seldom can ye rest;
But He who loves the children
Doth count ye blest.

Oh, quiet, peaceful fingers
That have no tasks to ply,
No tiny garments waiting
As in the days gone by,
No burden at the noontide
Of busy toil to bear,
No precious hands at even
To fold for lispèd prayer!
Oh, lonely, longing mother!
The shadows yet shall flee;
The Lord who loves the children
Remembers thee.

Oh, trembling, yearning fingers
That waken flowers to wave
Amid the dew-wet grasses
Upon the baby's grave!
The little face that vanished
Is cradled in a nest
Beyond the winds of trouble,
Upon the Saviour's breast.
Oh, trusting, praying mother!
Where partings shall not be,
The Shepherd of the children
Hath room for thee!

"WHERE THE SHOE PINCHES."

BY C. J. BLAKE, AUTHOR OF "THE KEY OF THE CASTLE," ETC.

"OF all the children that ever were born to be a plague and a trial, I do believe mine are the worst!" Mrs. Watkins had a flush on her face, and a sparkle of tears—tears rather of indignation than of sorrow—in her black eyes; she shut her own door with a bang, and, carrying her six-months-old baby in her arms, turned into her next-door neighbour's house.

Sarah Lane, a gentle, sad-eyed woman, with threads of grey in her neatly-braided hair, and an expression of quiet resignation in her face and attitude, sat sewing by the table in her very clean, tidy sitting-room. She looked up as Mrs. Watkins entered.

"Come in and sit down," she said heartily. "You look hot and tired this afternoon, and no wonder; baby's getting heavy, isn't she?"

The younger woman took the proffered chair, and prepared to enter upon the story of her troubles.

"'Tisn't only baby," she said irritably, "though I'm sure a babe in arms is trouble enough for one person, without three or four more little bothers, to run in and out, and make a noise and a litter, from morning till night. The life I've had this last week or two with mine no one would believe."

Mrs. Lane smiled. "Ah! they've had holidays, haven't they?" she said with sympathy. "But cheer up, Mary, they are gone to school again now; while you are resting I'll make you a quiet cup of tea, and you will have a bit of peace, at any rate."

Mrs. Watkins looked a little more pleasant.

"You are kind," she answered. "What I should do without you to come to sometimes, I don't know. I've been vexed this afternoon, above a bit. You remember those carnations in our garden, that were just coming in such lovely bloom? I went down to look at them after dinner, and if that little scamp of a Jimmy hadn't pulled off every one of the blossoms! What his father'll say when he comes home to-night, I can't think. I'd have given it the young rascal if he'd been at home, but he was gone off to school with the rest."

Mrs. Lane looked grave.

"You should teach Jimmy better than that," she said. "He's but a little one, to be sure, but he's old enough to know right from wrong, and to understand that he mustn't touch, when he's told."

The mother gave an angry toss of her head.

"It's easy talking," she retorted. "People that have neither chick nor child always think there's no art in managing a lot of children. Only let them try it—that's all. I tell you, Sarah, I'm sick and tired of it sometimes; nothing but work and worry, and no time to do anything that's really worth doing. 'No one knows where the shoe pinches but those that wear it.' For my part I envy you, sitting here like a lady, with your house ever so nice, and never a child to pull things about."

Sarah Lane's sad eyes filled with tears.

"Do you think my shoe never pinches?" she said. "Listen, Mary, and I will tell you a true story of my own life. It's twenty years and more now since my husband, that's dead and gone, asked me to be his wife. I thought, when I married John Lane, that life was to be all sunshine and happiness, and that I'd little to do but enjoy myself. But things don't turn out in this world as we plan and intend they should; two years after we were married, John's work fell off, and I had to take again to my old trade of dressmaking. I couldn't bear to go short of anything in the house, or that John and I shouldn't be well-dressed and respectable. So I sat at work early and late, and when my first baby was born it was a poor delicate thing that just pined away for want of strength, and died in three months.

Christ Blessing the Children.

"But when the next child was coming, John put his foot down, and said that, whether we'd everything we wanted or not, he'd not have me slaving and sewing all the while, but that I should take care of my own health first. It caused a deal of difference between us, but I was obliged to give in; and the baby, when it was born, was a beautiful healthy boy. He went on all one way for a few months, and his father was ever so fond of him and proud of him. But I had grown used to earning money of my own, and, partly unknown to John, I did as much work as ever I could. Then teething troubles began, and John made a dreadful to-do if the baby ailed anything. He seemed to me terribly fussy and particular. I was a wicked woman, Mary, for I know I was half sorry sometimes that baby was there to hinder me when I might have got so much work, for people counted me a clever hand in those days.

"Well, one week baby had been worse than usual, and John was vexed that he was forced to go away for a long day's work, and that he wouldn't be able to get back till late at night.

"'Look after the child, whatever you do,' were his

last words to me; but I had got a dress to finish for a lady who sometimes employed me, and I thought John's being away would give me a splendid chance.

"Poor Frankie looked very white and ill even to me, but I said to myself, 'La! he's only teething. To-morrow, when the dress is done, I'll take him to the doctor.' So I sewed and sewed, and hardly stopped to take him up from morning till night, though he moaned to himself and his breathing was very queer. When eight o'clock came I put him upstairs in his little cot. He'll be quiet up there, I thought, and I shall get on with the finishing part; that's always the most troublesome. For an hour or two I listened for his crying, and every now and then I heard him; then he seemed to drop asleep, and I got so taken up with my work that I gave quite a start when the door opened and John came in.

"'Where's the child?' he said, as soon as he was over the doorstep. I don't know how it was, but a sudden dreadful feeling came over me, and I could hardly answer.

"'In bed, John,' I said, as soon as I could speak.

"He took a candle from the shelf, and went straight upstairs.

I followed on tip-toe.

"'Be quiet,' I said, in a hushed voice; 'he's asleep.'

"John turned round from the cot and gave me such a dreadful look as I shall never forget.

"'He's dead!' he said, with a dry, choking sort of sob, and he ran out of the house for the doctor, and left me there with the poor little dead baby.

* * * * *

"Five years John and I lived together after that, but we'd never another child, and I do think John never truly forgave me. He was kind to me in a way, but he never loved me as he would have done if I'd done all I could for Frankie.

"Then John died, and I've been very lonely since; though I trust I've been forgiven now, and I've learned to be resigned. But, oh, Mary, Mary! don't you complain, you who have your husband spared to you, and your healthy, happy children; the time may come when you'd give all the world to have these days over again, and to be able to care for them and tend them. Believe me, it's better to be almost worn out with the trouble and fatigue of a family than to have to sit, like me, with an empty house and empty hands, and a bitter, bitter regret always at your heart. There, I didn't mean to make you cry, but I thought I'd like you to know this, and perhaps the talk 'll do us both good."

Mary Watkins wiped her eyes and clasped her neighbour's hand.

"Thank you for telling me," she said. "I must go now, for they will be home soon; but you may be sure, Sarah, I'll not forget."

MOTHERS IN COUNCIL.

CONDUCTED BY MRS. E. M. WATERWORTH, AUTHOR OF "MOTHERS AT HOME," ETC.

April 1st, 1896.

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I am very pleased to see by the number of letters that have reached me that so many of you take an interest in our Puzzle Paragraph. It has been rather a difficult matter to decide which was the best answer to the January puzzle.

One thing struck me very much in all the letters, and that was, every one of you put down a great deal more work for the servant before eight o'clock than any maid I have ever seen managed to get through. Country girls do, I believe, work more quickly than Londoners, and as most of the answers come from the country, perhaps that accounts for it. Anyway, I wish I could get a servant to do the amount of work in an hour and a half which you have planned for her. Taking all things into consideration, I think that Mrs. Marks's solution is the best, and she has received her book. Capital answers were also sent by Mrs. Burbidge, Mrs. Allen, Mrs. Nash and Mrs. Thorrowgood, and by Miss Keen and Miss Hillman.

* * * *

Here is the best answer to Mrs. Brown's question in the January number: "I would advise her to instruct her maid to rise early, so as to have the very dirty work done before the family breakfast. To quietly open the house, and clean all grates, lay fires and light according to the time fixed for breakfast. Fill all scuttles, clean boots, lay and prepare breakfast. After she has had her own, attend to bedrooms, opening beds, Mrs. Brown helping to make her own bed and dust her room. Each day arrange for one room to be turned out, or some special cleaning done, after the bedrooms are finished and breakfast cleared. Say, Monday, prepare and wash what laundry work may be done at home; Tuesday, one sitting-room; Wednesday, the other room; Thursday, upstairs rooms; Friday, silver and all bright things; Saturday, kitchen and hall, which is to be kept in order every day. Outside steps to be done when tradespeople have called. Windows to be cleaned when each room is cleaned. Mrs. Brown to pin up curtains, and cover up all small articles and nice things, and arrange the room when cleaning is done."

* * * *

I wonder, dear "A. M. H.," why you gave me no name for yourself, nor a number for your house, neither a stamp for a reply? As your letter was written for the welfare of another, I broke through my rule and answered it; but, for all I know, you may not have received it. It is doubtful whether initials alone sent to a Terrace will ever reach the right person. I hope, however, that your postman was specially clever, and that you have succeeded in making your nephew's collars and cuffs look very nice. As other kind women may be equally anxious for their men folk, I will repeat the directions for glazing linen. Get some of Mack's double starch. Put enough hot water to cover it. The heat of the water is of the greatest importance; it must not be boiling, and it must not be cool—you should just be able to hold your hand in it. Let the starch stand till it is dissolved, then add a little more hot water, so that it is like thin paste. Dip the collars in, wring them well, and rub the starch thoroughly in. Put the collars

in a piece of dry linen and leave them alone for half an hour, then iron them in the usual way.

After that, you must damp the surface slightly with a piece of linen dipped in clean cold water. Then lay each collar on a hard flat surface and polish it with the *edge* of your iron, pressing as hard as you possibly can. Please remember that it is entirely the *pressure* that should produce the gloss. Most laundresses use some special preparation, but it wears out the linen, and if you follow out these directions and persevere, you will succeed.

* * * *

Thanks many, "MOTHER OF SEVEN," for your kind words; letters such as yours are as good as a tonic. Seven! That is just two more than David named as the source of happiness, you know. But perhaps you don't know, though, that a "quiverful" was five.

* * * *

If you are doubtful about the purity of the water in your house, "JANE," I should advise you to test it in the following way. Get a perfectly clean pint bottle. Fill it nearly full of the water which you wish to test, and put into it half a teaspoonful of powdered loaf sugar. Cork the bottle tightly and put it in a warm place for two days. If the water turns cloudy or milky by that time, you ought not to drink it. Supposing you cannot obtain any other, you must boil the water first, and filter it afterwards. But rain water is the purest to be had; only the griminess of the soft-water tub makes us all think rain water must be dirty. Catch what you can in a clean vessel and see for yourself.

* * * *

I hope my kind correspondent at Wickham Market will be able to send me better news soon. Deafness must be one of the most trying of the many ills this poor flesh of ours inherits. Any of us who have mixed much with deaf and blind people cannot fail to have noticed that those who cannot see, are, as a rule, far more amiable than those who cannot hear. Of course, there are exceptions, and I am sure my friend will try to be one. Deafness comes from so many causes that it is impossible in a paper like this to give any remedies. If it is not hereditary, nor caused by any accident, the chances are that it arises from some other part of the body not doing its work properly, and the best plan is to consult a first-rate general practitioner, who would look out for mischief in throat, nose, liver, and stomach, and not examine the ear only. These bodies of ours are wonderfully made, and just as one faulty bolt may wreck a whole train, so one organ out of gear may upset the whole of our bodily system. A well-known aurist once told me that a great deal of deafness was caused by people sleeping with their ears covered over by the bed-clothes.

This same doctor made a fortune quite unexpectedly. An enormously fat man came to consult him about increasing deafness. "I can do you no good till you have got rid of some of that fat," he observed to his patient. The latter remarked humbly that he would only too gladly reduce his size, but he had tried everything in vain. The aurist gave him a few simple rules—no medicine; and the result was—less fat and more hearing? No; there was another most unexpected result. The square in which the doctor lived was ere long a kind of show, where people in various stages of obesity might be seen wending their way to No. 2, much to the amusement of the small boys of the neighbourhood.

Both doctor and patient have long gone to their rest, so it is no use trying to fit the cap on anyone, please.

Sea-bathing is a fruitful source of deafness too, I can assure you. It's no use telling me that thousands bathe and get no harm; in that, as in many other things I tell you, it is a case of the survival of the toughest.

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OUR PUZZLE PARAGRAPH.

The question for February brought plenty of answers, all so good that I felt quite proud of the many careful managers in our Mothers' Council. One competitor evidently likes sugar immensely, as she allows three pounds a head each week. She will not shatter her nerves with two ounces of tea!

My experience of housekeeping, with only five in family, and now with eleven, tells me that, taking big and little people together, the average consumption of bread is little, if anything, over the quartern loaf per head, especially where you allow ½ lb. of meat a day.

Of course, in such an easy competition, the difference of an ounce or so must decide the prize, which I have sent to Mrs. P., Chatham (I withhold the name by request), whose allowance is thus given:—

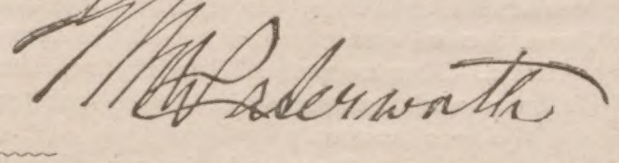
Butter: Half a pound. Sugar: One pound. Tea: Quarter of a pound. Bread: Four pounds. Cheese: Half a pound. Meat: Three pounds and a half.

Almost as good were the answers sent by the Misses Pearce, Laight, Beeton, Turner, Eversfield, and Cornish, and Mrs. Jacob Line, Mrs. George Jenner, Mrs. Nash, Mrs. Warren, Careful Martha, and Mother (Sheffield). Fanny FitzGibbon sent a very clever answer in verse, which I would gladly publish if I had room.

The puzzle for this month is as follows:—

Mrs. Roberts has a daughter of eight, who cares for nothing but books. What plan should she adopt in bringing up the child? Mrs. Roberts, I may add for your guidance, is what is commonly called "comfortably off." A book valued at half-a-crown will be sent to the writer of the best solution of this difficulty. Letters must reach me at 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C., not later than April 15th, and envelopes should be marked "Puzzle Paragraph." Hoping that you will do your best for Mrs. Roberts and the little book-worm,

Yours faithfully



A Mayor's Advice.—Addressing a temperance meeting the other day, a popular mayor told a story about an astute farmer at Lund who, when asked how he kept his pigs from wandering, observed, "Why, mon, aw tether 'em." "How do you tether them?" was the next question. "Oh, aw feed 'em wi' good oatmeal balls," he replied. "Aw tether 'em by their stummicks." "And now, you ladies," said the Mayor, applying his story, "if you will only make a little more tasty meals for your husbands, they will not perhaps feel that craving to enter the public-house for a glass of beer."

HINTS ON HOME DRESSMAKING.

BY A PRACTICAL DRESSMAKER.

IT is said that the dress of the season will be in the princess style. We generally look upon such dresses as only suitable for slim figures, but so many new ways of making up the so-called princess dress have been invented that it can be made to suit both slender and full figures to perfection. Some robes are cut with princess fronts only, whilst others have long, flowing backs, the same effect being produced by the trimming. In all cases the skirt is made to hang in flutes, after the much admired godet style. Many of the dresses appear with basques, which are always arranged in flutes. Buttons are much favoured as ornaments, and they are used in every possible way, both with and without other trimming. They are either very large or very small, and are made of most costly material, mounted with silver and surrounded by paste diamonds; indeed, glittering buttons and trimmings will be very much used.

Velveteen is much used for children's dresses. Electric-blue, with a lighter shade of silk or satin, makes a very effective dress. The skirt should be mounted with flat pleats, and the loose bodice or long yoke striped in front with pleated silk. Bretelles of velvet and large buttons cross the front and back of the bodice, and the full puff of the sleeve is of silk and the lower part of velvet.

Fig. 12.

Fig. 13.

Fig. 12. We show here a long, loose blouse coat for a little boy between the age of two and four. It is made in dark blue cheviot, with a plastron and sailor collar of the same. The plastron is mounted on stiff material and sewn down on the left side and buttoned over on the right side. The waist is drawn in with a leather belt; full sleeve with deep cuff. Invisible fastenings are used below the waist. Large white linen sailor collars are sometimes worn with blouses of this description. They are made of Russian linen ornamented with drawn work, and should be of double material with an interlining of canvas.

Fig. 13 is a girl's dress made in one of those neat, stylish patterns that always "take" with our readers. The skirt is moderately full, and arranged in pleats at the back. The body is made over a tight-fitting lining, and has a yoke of figured velvet; below this the material is set on in gathers and made to fall in the drooping style now so fashionable. The bretelle used round the armhole is made with velvet, as is also the cuff, and both should have an interlining of stiff muslin or canvas, the same being used for the waist-band, which is made of the material and finished with two large buttons. The neck-band is of velvet, and is finished with a ribbon bow at the back.

Fig. 14.

Fig. 14. Most of our readers will be delighted with the pattern shown under this number. It comprises a skirt and cape intended for wearing with a blouse bodice, and if such a colour is chosen as will permit the cape being worn over other dresses, it will make a useful wrap all through the spring and cool summer days. The material chosen will decide whether the cape will need lining. Should this be the case, a pongee or shot lining silk, which is a mixture of cotton and silk, will be found very durable. The cape must have a seam down the centre, which can be on the straight edge of the material, and should be well pressed, while the fronts are made firm by a second piece of cloth laid over on either side, to which the button tabs are secured. Any pretty shade of blue, brown, or dark green would be very suitable for this costume.

Fig. 15. This dress will be found very becoming, and is also very easy to make, a great consideration to home dressmakers. It consists of an entirely plain skirt and jacket bodice.

The latter is fastened down the centre with patent hooks, which are hidden by the trimming. It finishes with a point both back and front, and reaches scarcely below the hips at the sides.

The trimming consists of bands of lace, ribbon, or braid set on lengthway over the back and front of the bodice, and also over the sleeve puff. The same can be also used round the edge of the skirt and jacket bodice if desired.

Fig. 15.

Flat Patterns can be supplied. Figs. 12, 13, 14, and 15, 6½d. each, post free. Address "M.C. Pattern," 9, Paternoster Row, London, E.C.